

Walter Kaufmann and the Winnipeg Ballet: A Fruitful Collaboration Soon Forgotten

Walter Kaufmann et le Winnipeg Ballet : Une collaboration fructueuse tombée dans l'oubli

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Résumé de l'article

Les premières années du Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB), durant lesquelles il était dirigé par son fondateur Gweneth Lloyd (1901–1993), demeurent obscures du fait que tous les biens de la compagnie furent détruits par un incendie en 1954. Les tentatives de retracer l'histoire de cette institution – notamment dans l'ouvrage de Max Wyman intitulé *The Royal Winnipeg Ballet : The First Forty Years* (Doubleday, Toronto, 1978) et le documentaire de Jeff McKay et Patti Ross Milne, *40 Years of One Night Stands* (2008) – souffrent d'une insuffisante prise en compte de la musique utilisée par la compagnie. Or, le RWB a monté plusieurs ballets sur une musique originale, généralement écrite par des compositeurs canadiens.

L'un de ces compositeurs est Walter Kaufmann (1907–1984), un Juif allemand qui avait quitté son pays en 1934 et qui a vécu au Canada à partir de 1947. Nommé directeur musical du Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra l'année suivante, il fut chargé d'écrire une partition pour *Visages*, un ballet abstrait présenté aux célébrations du dixième anniversaire de la compagnie, en janvier 1949, et pour *The Rose and the Ring*, un « ballet pour le Noël des enfants » (selon le RWB) qui fut créé en décembre de la même année.

L'étude de la genèse, de l'esthétique et de la réception par le public et la critique de ces deux ballets a pu être réalisée grâce à l'examen des partitions autographes conservées à l'Université de l'Indiana, à Bloomington, de documents contemporains, en particulier des revues de presse et, pour *Visages*, d'un documentaire de l'Office national du film du Canada, *Ballet Festival* (1949). *Visages* fut immédiatement salué comme une réussite artistique de premier plan et demeura un pilier du répertoire du RWB jusqu'à l'incendie de 1954. Le RWB présenta *Visages* aux Festivals du ballet canadien de Toronto (1949) et de Montréal (1950), suscitant les éloges du célèbre critique Anatole Chujoy, et le ballet fut dansé régulièrement en tournée, notamment à Washington (1954). En se référant à la reconstitution en 1992 par Anna Blewchamp du ballet *The Wise Virgins* de Gweneth Lloyd, qui fut aussi détruit par les flammes en 1954, l'auteur évalue finalement les chances d'une reprise de *Visages*.

Walter Kaufmann and the Winnipeg Ballet: A Fruitful Collaboration Soon Forgotten¹

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(Waiblingen, Germany)

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet—“Royal” since 1953—is a Canadian institution, but the first years of its existence, the era of its founding director, Gweneth Lloyd,² remain strangely obscure because during the night of 7–8 June 1954, all costumes, decorations, sound recordings, choreographic records, and musical scores in the possession of the company perished in a fire. The documentary film *40 Years of One Night Stands* (2008), produced by Patti Ross Milne and directed by Jeff McKay, admirably succeeds in bringing the era back to life, but it remains almost silent about the music accompanying the lost choreographies, which included several original scores.

Some notes on Walter Kaufmann

The only composer of such a score mentioned in *40 Years of One Night Stands* is Walter Kaufmann, but again, his name is merely referenced in passing, without a comment on who he was. The short entry on Kaufmann in the second edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (“Kaufmann, Walter” 2001, 843) gives no clue to the larger-than-life figure he was in his day.

According to his last employer, Indiana University in Bloomington, he was “the epitome of the complete musician” (Jacobs School of Music n.d.): a composer, conductor, pianist, violist, teacher, administrator, musicologist, and ethnomusicologist. Born in Karlsbad, Bohemia, in 1907, Kaufmann studied with Franz Schreker and Curt Sachs in Berlin. He left Berlin before 1933 for Prague, where he was a doctoral candidate in musicology. Yet, as Kaufmann himself put it, “I have been unable to complete my doctorate in Prague as early as 1934 (the atmosphere was impossible

and my *ordinarius* [i.e., chair; his name was Gustav Becking] was a Nazi)” (letter from Kaufmann to Franz E. Gumpert, 12 October 1976, Walter Kaufmann Archive, box 1). Kaufmann made an unexpected move to India in 1934, where he stayed until 1946. From 1946 to 1947 he was with the BBC in London. Kaufmann came to Canada to join the staff of the Halifax Conservatory for the 1947–48 academic year.³ Then Sir Ernest MacMillan successfully recommended him as the founding conductor of the newly formed Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (Morris 1948). Kaufmann arrived in Winnipeg in November 1948.

Visages, the Commission for the Winnipeg Ballet’s Tenth Anniversary

The Winnipeg Ballet was quick to exploit the opportunities offered by the presence of the Winnipeg Symphony and its new and versatile director. Only six weeks after the orchestra’s inaugural concert on 16 December 1948, a gala in honor of the Winnipeg Ballet’s tenth anniversary was held on 31 January 1949. Kaufmann conducted the 32-piece orchestra. Choreographer Gweneth Lloyd and Kaufmann had created a new one-act ballet, *Visages*, for the occasion. It was Kaufmann’s first ballet score. The last page of the autograph *Visages* score, which is preserved in the Walter Kaufmann Archive (box 12), is dated “December 27th, 1948, Winnipeg.” The program of the gala includes a synopsis of the ballet, apparently written by Lloyd herself and reprinted, with only minimal changes, in the known programs of all later performances of *Visages*:

Far beyond the material world, the girl and her lover weave
the innocent pattern of their young love; then with [the]

¹ I would like to thank the following persons and institutions: The Royal Winnipeg Ballet Alumni Association, especially its former president, the late Margaret (Hample) Piasecki, who first showed the way, and its current recording/corresponding secretary, Gina Morham; the Cook Music Library of Indiana University, Bloomington; Dance Collection Danse, Toronto, especially its director of research, Amy Bowring; Anna Blewcham, Toronto; Adrian Hoffman, Halifax; Agata Schindler, Dresden; Joyce (Clark) Vopni, Whitby, Ont.; Max Wyman, Vancouver.

² Gweneth Lloyd (1901–1993) was an Englishwoman from Lancashire. She received her training as a dancer and educator in Liverpool and London. Her most influential teacher was Ruby Ginner, who had created a style called “Revived Greek Dance.” Together with her friend Betty Hey (later married Farrally), Lloyd settled in Winnipeg in 1938. Lloyd and Farrally started a dance school and also a society, first called the “Winnipeg Ballet Club,” that gradually evolved into a professional ballet company. Lloyd was the defining force of the company in its early years; she was responsible for all choreographies until 1949 except for Paddy Stone’s *Zigeuner* (Gypsies, 1943). From 1950, Lloyd lived and worked in Toronto, from 1957 in Kelowna, British Columbia. She also taught in Banff, Alberta.

³ For more information on Kaufmann’s early years see the publications of German (Slovak-born) musicologist Agata Schindler (see bibliography).

growing awareness of maturity they are assailed by dissonant emotions—. Indecision, felt by the girl, begins to separate her from her lover. Seeing her doubt, Jealousy joins him, and with a consequent deterioration in the quality of their love— Lust is added to Jealousy.

Other underlying emotions Fear, Greed, and Tragedy, are in abeyance, but are being gradually aroused by Indecision, Jealousy and Lust.

Driven by Fear, the girl battles with Jealousy and Lust and the lovers gain a temporary reconciliation with a deepened sense of passion. The discordant emotions are subdued to a rhythm which moves with the pattern of their new love.

Passion awakes the sense of possession in the man, who partnered by Greed, arouses her Hate, dragging their love through the depth of Tragedy, which finally sublimates their love (Winnipeg Ballet 1949a, 5).

Each of the seven “emotions”—Indecision, Jealousy, Lust, Fear, Greed, Hate, and Tragedy—was embodied by a dancer wearing a fanciful costume in striking colors. Each costume included a characteristic mask. These masks were the faces—*visages*—the ballet’s title alluded to. The couple of lovers, simply called “the Man” and “the Girl,” wore white ballet garb and no masks.

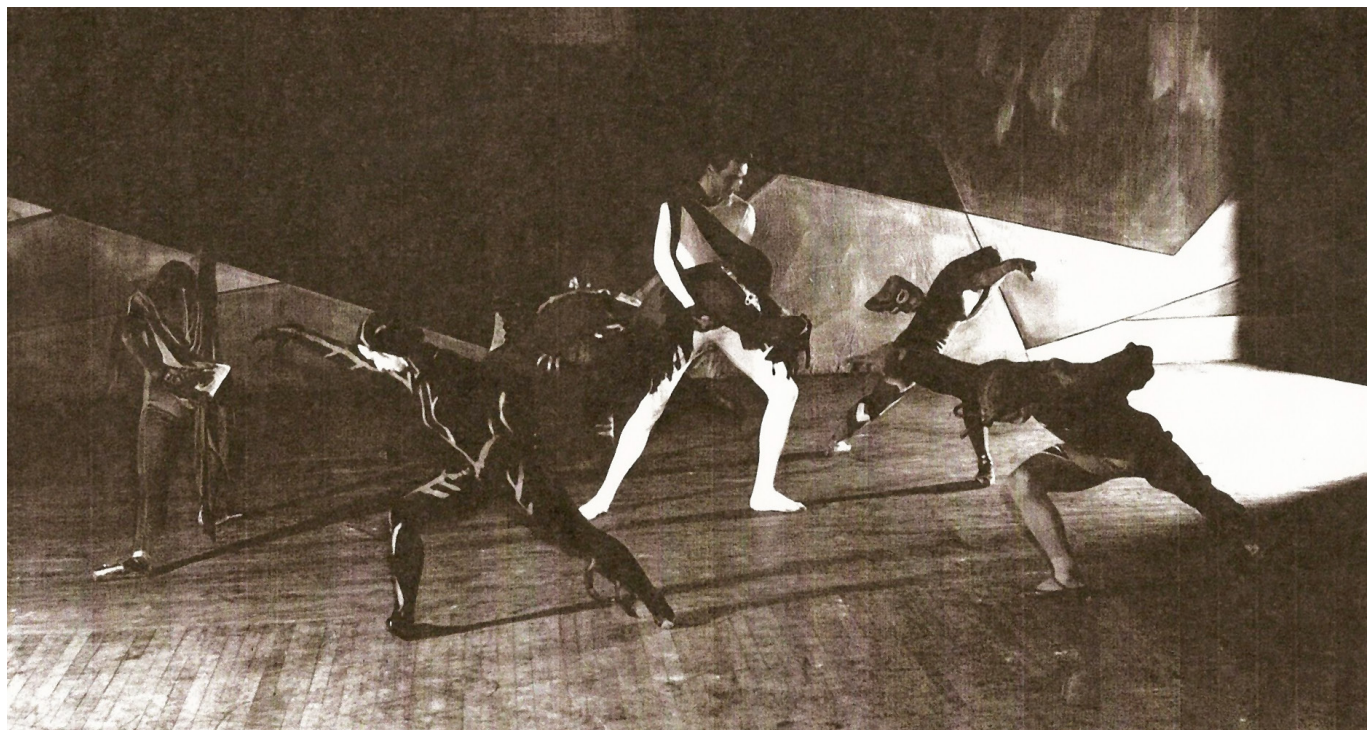
The two daily newspapers of the city at that time, the *Winnipeg Free Press* (still active) and the *Winnipeg Tribune* (now defunct), were ambitious publications and gave the arts comprehensive coverage. Their regular critics—Frank A. Morriss for the *Free Press* and S. Roy Maley for the *Tribune*—hailed *Visages* as the greatest achievement so

far in the history of the Winnipeg Ballet (Morriss 1949a; Maley 1949a). Maley makes the more detailed comments, especially on the music:

Visages is a work of startling originality, sharp in its impacts and implications and creating an eerie, macabre mood of frightening suspense at times. [...] Gweneth Lloyd’s choreography is well-knit, clear and graphic. Mr. Kaufmann’s score provides a perfect union in discordant, angry, dissonant harmonies, which form the complementary tissue of the young lovers’ lives as they are caught up in a vortex of confusion and tangled emotional distress. [...] In [the] last moments the music forsakes its biting discordant, cross-rhythmed and harshly asperic character and takes on an almost Bach-like, spiritually ecstatic quality (Maley 1949a).

The one-movement piece is scored for an orchestra of 28 musicians: two flutes, one oboe, two clarinets in B-flat, one bassoon, two horns in F, three trumpets in B-flat, two trombones (without further specifications), [two] timpani, percussion, harp, piano, three first violins, three second violins, two violas, two violoncellos, and one double bass (with four standard strings). The orchestra of the premiere was slightly larger and gathered 32 musicians (Maley 1949a); maybe the percussion, consisting of triangle, side drum, cassa (bass drum), xylophone, gong, and cymbal[s], was played by more than one person. The score is 371 measures long; most sections of the music are framed by repeat marks.⁴ The pervasive, layered ostinato patterns are obviously indebted to Stravinsky. The patterns in themselves are rather simple; complexity results only from their

Figure 1: A still from *Visages*. Courtesy of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.



⁴ Kaufmann’s autograph measure count runs to measure 372, but from measures 290 to 295, it is only four measures, not five. The numbers in this article have been corrected.

combination. The sections that rely entirely on ostinatos are extremely dissonant, often superimposing a diatonic layer (“white keys”) over a pentatonic layer (“black keys”). The degree of dissonance, especially the frequent patterns in parallel minor seconds and major sevenths, must have sounded eerie at the time—not only in Winnipeg, as will be seen. The highly dissonant, tonally ambiguous sections contrast with passages dominated by a lilting melody with “oriental” traits, rising over the ostinatos and loosely anchored in the key of D major.

Although there are no references to the action in the score, it is clear that the lilting melody is a theme of love. It is heard throughout the quiet initial section (mm. 1 to 91, corresponding to “the girl and her lover weave the innocent pattern of their young love” from the synopsis above); it returns during a condensed recapitulation, in far more passionate guise, overlaid with some of the dramatic (and chromatic) ostinatos (mm. 247–81: “the lovers gain a temporary reconciliation with a deepened sense of passion”); and it is brought back twice more in the coda, first at a last climax (mm. 329–49) and then quietly, as in the beginning (mm. 359–70: “Tragedy finally sublimates their love”), thus rounding off the work in ethereal D major, if not without a dissonant note (E in the violoncello). It is only here that the music, to use Maley’s words, “forsakes its biting discordant, cross-rhythmed and harshly asperic character and takes on an almost Bach-like, spiritually ecstatic quality” (Maley 1949a). According to a note (probably by Lloyd) quoted in the thesis of Anna Blewchamp, an English-born, Toronto-based choreographer who can count as the leading authority on Lloyd at this time, the lovers turn to “the sanctuary of each others [*sic*] arms” at the end of the ballet (Blewchamp 1992, 57).

It would be tempting to surmise that each of the seven emotions had a particular ostinato as its leitmotif. What *can* be claimed with certainty is that the passage in the manner of a funeral march, which precedes the coda (mm. 309–28; see also mm. 350–58), stands for Tragedy.

The enthusiastic reception of *Visages* was a surprise to the company itself. As the company’s manager, David Yeddeau, explained to a journalist in Ottawa in October 1949: “One of our most popular ballets is *Visages*—the one which has music by Walter Kaufmann, the conductor of the Winnipeg Symphony. It is an abstract ballet, using masks, and we were really surprised to find that it was such a big hit” (Thistle 1949). A real success it was, no doubt, although the

statements of the two Winnipeg critics should always be taken with a grain of salt. In the days of Lloyd, they supported the Winnipeg Ballet almost unconditionally. Maley was more objective than Morriss, but according to Jeffrey Anderson in the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, “his criticisms were encouraging more often than judgmental” (Anderson 1992).

In fact, critics elsewhere would mostly agree with Maley and Morriss. In the first week of March 1949, the company presented *Visages* at the second Canadian Ballet Festival at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto. *The Globe and Mail* had engaged American (Russian born) ballet expert Anatole Chujoy as guest critic for the duration of the festival. He found: “The Winnipeg Ballet’s *Visages*, choreographed by Gweneth Lloyd to Walter Kaufmann’s music [...] is an outstanding example of a ballet in the modern idiom” (Chujoy 1949a). The article was illustrated by a large photograph of Jean McKenzie (The Girl) and Arnold Spohr (The Man) performing in *Visages*.⁵ Chujoy does not write much about the music of the ballets presented at the festival; usually, he is content with mentioning the composer, although, to be sure, he does not exclude the music from his praise for *Visages*. The only score earning a special mention by Chujoy that year is John Weinzweig’s for *The Red Ear of Corn*, a new production of the Volkoff Ballet of Toronto (Chujoy 1949b). Augustus Bridle, *Toronto Star*’s main critic, corroborates Chujoy’s judgment, singling out *The Red Ear of Corn* as the “best scored” work although, like Chujoy, he expresses dissatisfaction with its choreography (Bridle 1949). On the other hand, while he praises *Visages* for its visual merits and story, the only thing he writes about its music is that it has been “cleverly modernized by Walter Kaufmann, ‘cond.’ of the Winnipeg Orchestra” (Bridle 1949). Others gave Lloyd and Kaufmann equal credit, such as Guy Glover: “It was with *Visages*, set to an original score by Walter Kaufmann, that the Winnipeg choreographer [Lloyd] displayed her most mature approach to ballet, and set a standard of excellence which no other festival ballet touched” (Clover 1949).

The 2 March show, which featured both *The Red Ear of Corn* and *Visages*, was broadcast live by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), not only in Canada but worldwide through its short-wave service, Voice of Canada (Bowring 2002, 79–80).⁶ A complete recording of the CBC broadcast is not available and perhaps not even extant.⁷ But Guy Glover produced a documentary film, entitled *Ballet Festival*, for the National Film Board of Canada. The

⁵ Arnold Spohr (1923–2010), a native of Saskatchewan and student of Lloyd and Farrally, danced with the (Royal) Winnipeg Ballet from 1945 until the fire of 1954. In 1958, while in England, he was called back to become the company’s director. During the thirty years of his tenure, the company rose to worldwide fame.

⁶ Bowring does not mention the exact date. For that information, see R. McL. F. 1949.

⁷ Dance Collection Danse (DCD) in Toronto holds a recording of the first half of this broadcast, which is the “Weinzweig half”; unfortunately the recording, donated to DCD by Weinzweig, breaks off as host Fraser Macdonald turns to explaining *Visages*.

Figure 2: Sketch by Dorothy Phillips for *Visages*. Courtesy of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.



eleven-minute film was shot under the direction of Roger Blais. The excerpt from *Visages* is the longest of any single ballet on this film. It is 2 minutes and 19 seconds long (Blais 1949, 3:42 to 6:01).⁸

It is easy to identify what is *audible* on the film: measures 286 through 305, repeat of measures 282 through 305 (as indicated in the score), and measures 306 through 309 from Kaufmann’s score. The excerpt in the film ushers in applause, but this seems to be the ingenious work of the cutter. The score continues for another sixty-two measures. It is somewhat more difficult to identify what is *visible* on the film, that is, which episode of the action is depicted. The characters of the Girl and the Man—danced by Jean McKenzie and Arnold Spohr—are easy to recognize. But when it comes to the seven “emotions,” the allegorical characters wearing masks, one will wonder which is which. It would be much easier to decide if the film were in color because each of the allegorical characters had his or her distinctive color:

Indecision	Blue and Green
Jealousy	Green
Lust	Red
Fear	Grey
Greed	Blue
Hate	Black
Tragedy	Purple

(Winnipeg Ballet 1949b, unpaginated⁹)

⁸ Until a few years ago the film could be ordered from the National Film Board (NFB) on VHS tape, which I did in 2006, but the NFB no longer issues VHS tapes, and *Ballet Festival* has not been digitized yet, making the film commercially unavailable. The entire soundtrack of the clip is included in the documentary film *40 Years of One Night Stands* (McKay and Milne 2008), but it is overlaid with narration, and its beginning serves, unannounced, as film music, accompanying pictures from the Winnipeg flood of 1948 (20:48 to 21:25). Only after this sequence, *Visages* is introduced in the narration, and the original pictures join the music.

⁹ The colors were not given in the program of the premiere.

¹⁰ The sketch is briefly shown in the film *40 Years of One Night Stands*.

In the archives of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, a colored sketch survives that provides a clue about the strong colors used in *Visages* (figure 2). It was drawn by Dorothy Phillips, who created the costumes and masks. Three of the allegorical figures are depicted: Lust, Tragedy, and Fear.¹⁰ While this sketch is of some help, the actual costumes used in the production differ from the drawing significantly. In general, they are less stylish (for lack of funds?). Also, as the program shows, two of the seven “emotions”—Lust and Greed—are embodied by male dancers, although the sketch depicts Lust as a female. Early in the film, a male figure appears who can be identified as Lust because he wears a monster on his

head—albeit not a snake; he drags the Girl away and is later assisted by a female, whom I would surmise to be Jealousy. By default, the other male with a mask must be Greed. Fear, the female with a white tape connecting her hands, is also easily recognizable in the film. The veiled female figure stepping between the two lovers at the end of the excerpt is Tragedy.

Considering that the excerpt of the music begins four measures after the end of the passionate recapitulation of the opening theme (“the lovers gain a temporary reconciliation with a deepened sense of passion”) and ends right before the “funeral march,” at the entrance of Tragedy, it can be safely assumed that the excerpt on the film corresponds to the section thus described in the synopsis: “Passion awakes the sense of possession in the man, who partnered by Greed, arouses her Hate, dragging their love through the depth of Tragedy” (Winnipeg Ballet 1949a, 5)

Visages was by no means the only ballet of its kind in Gweneth Lloyd’s oeuvre. But her earlier essays in the abstract genre, all of which were choreographed to pre-existing music, were seriously flawed. After the festival, E. G. Langdale summed up her achievement thus far:

From quite early on Miss Lloyd has staged abstract ballets which have a theme of struggle—roughly, of man against the dangers and difficulties of life and its passions—not, you will admit, an easy theme to interpret. Offhand I can remember

“The Planets” [1941] (music by Holst), “Les Préludes” [1943] (Liszt), and “Concerto” [1947] (Rachmaninoff), which were all built on this theme, but which, in spite of excellent settings, costuming and dancing, never quite came off. But this year the ballet “Visages,” which had music specially composed for it by Walter Kaufmann, had also a wonderfully blended setting, was costumed and masked in a way that can only be called inspired, and came off with the finality that is the proof of any fully matured work of art (Langdale 1949, 14).

The very fact that Lloyd did not try to create any further ballets in the abstract vein after *Visages* seems to suggest that with this work she considered her goal in this genre achieved. Although some authorities—from Yeddeau (Wyman 1978, 45) to Blewchamp, whose entire master’s thesis pays homage to that earlier ballet—have considered the biblical parable *The Wise Virgins*¹¹ of 1942 the best of Lloyd’s ballets, there is no doubt that *Visages* had the greater impact—not least because its original musical score aroused an interest in its own right and continued to intrigue later critics. The reviews in the Winnipeg papers after a main stage performance on 4 May 1949 are, for once, signed neither by Maley nor Morriss. Another author, identified solely by “V. B.,” writes in the *Free Press*:

[Kaufmann’s] music for the ballet, *Visages*, brought enthusiastic audience reaction. [...] Mr. Kaufmann’s music opens in a lilting, sensual mood, scored now and then with vivid and dramatic tension as the plot unfolds. The discord brought into the love affair by indecision, jealousy, lust, fear, greed, hate and finally tragedy, is vividly portrayed and the music builds up to a thrilling emotional intensity (V. B. 1949).

While the above mostly confirms what others had said before, the musings of “R. P.” in the *Tribune* about “Visages, the ballet of masks” go further:

Visages might well be considered an antiseptic version of a Tibetan devil-dance. The seven ‘enemies of love’ may well represent the Seven Deadly Sins of a medieval morality play. These out-of-date and somewhat devitalized concepts cavort around a tepid boy-and-girl symbol of love in a space-time framework provided by J. F. Plaskett’s interstellar decor and Walter Kaufmann’s tense, machine-driven music.

The total effect can, I believe, become terrific: I would like to see it more than half a dozen times, to explore its wonderful possibilities, still be finding new riches in it.

Its very restraints, its monotonies, its flattening and blurring of symbols which have for centuries moved the soul of man are of service, for they leave the stimulated imagination free to recognize one’s own private demons.

This Winnipeg triumvirate [*sic*] of artist, composer and choreographer has created a contemporary work of some magnitude: even its avoidance of progressive movement and its scaling down of tragedy to the status of a mere emotion are evidence of good taste—that is, of insight into the spirit of these times (R. P. 1949).

Visages stirred Winnipeg audiences in a way that other ballets, even abstract ballets, did not. Telling is the reference in this last review to “one’s own private demons.” Even more telling is, of course, the unexpected reference to “good taste” at the very end. Canada’s cultivated Anglophones, English-born Gweneth Lloyd included, were still very much under the Victorian spell, and “good taste” was a category to be reckoned with. Indeed, when Blewchamp revived *The Wise Virgins* in 1992—an event to be discussed below—some critics identified this striving for virtuous restraint and decency as a hallmark of Lloyd’s style—and as something that made her work appear dated. Already in 1953, Guy Clover had remarked:

Gweneth Lloyd, a choreographer of unfailing musical qualities, has created a handful of works which are solid (but not stolid) in construction, charming, and occasionally exciting. The emotional range of her works is not wide, their emotional climate temperate. She has her moments of eloquence but these are usually on well-bred matters—although in “Visages” (1949), she attempted successfully a more adventurous kind of theme. Miss Lloyd has had difficulty finding dramatic material which both interested her and was usable, and this has led her to compose a preponderance of abstract or near-abstract works. While these can never be said to be dull [...] they almost never thrill or chill. They lack drama and fantasy. [...] She has yet to produce a really great ballet (Clover 1953, 506).

All the same, Blewchamp considers the abstract series Lloyd’s true achievement: “The argument that the abstract choreographies were the most definitive of Lloyd’s choreographies comes from the fact that the classical works were based on a genre that was not her own” (Blewchamp 1992, 61–62).

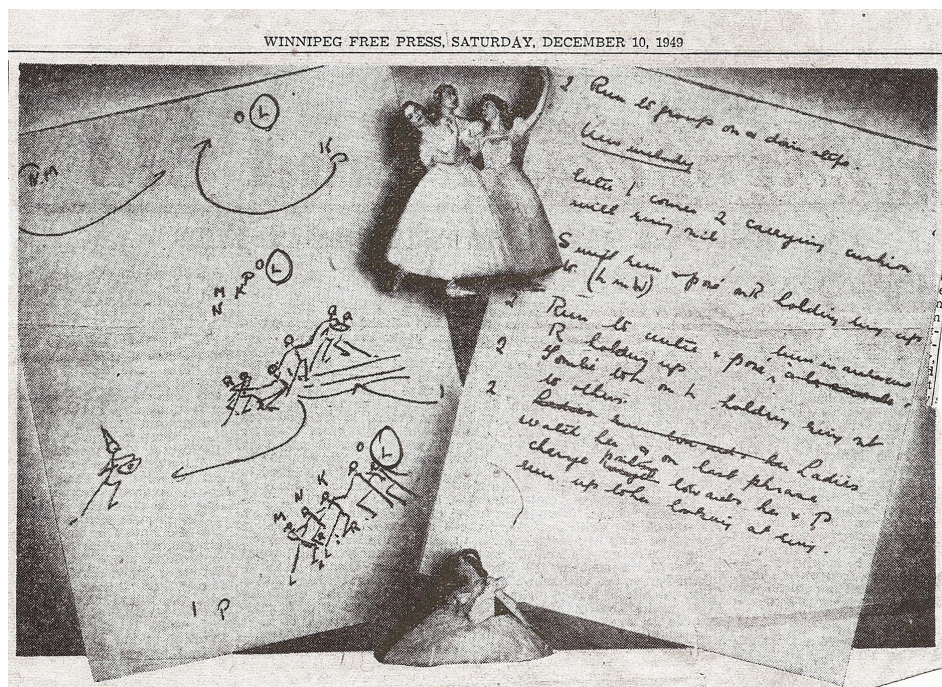
In Search of Accessibility: *The Rose and the Ring*

The second collaboration between Kaufmann and Lloyd, *The Rose and the Ring*, sought to appeal to the masses—and to children. Based on the fairy tale of the same name by William Makepeace Thackeray, it was conceived as a Christmastime “family show,” a Canadian counterpart to Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker*. It was the longest of Lloyd’s ballets and the only one to be presented as a full-length work, in three acts—although, as will be seen, it was not *that* long. Extensive use of pantomime further distinguished it from other Lloyd ballets. In an article published the day before the opening night, a critic described *The Rose and the Ring* as “not quite a pantomime but very nearly one” (F. B. W. 1949).

The creation of *The Rose and the Ring* took about three months in late 1949. On 10 December 1949, the *Winnipeg Free Press* published an extended “making-of” report

¹¹ Lloyd’s *Wise Virgins* is her “answer” to the eponymous ballet by Ninette de Valois that had its premiere at Sadler’s Wells in 1940. Both ballets use the same music: chorale preludes of Johann Sebastian Bach, orchestrated by William Walton in 1939.

Figure 3: Two pages from Lloyd's choreographic notation for *The Rose and the Ring* (Morris 1949c).



by Morris, “Many Hours of Hard Work Go Into Writing of Ballet.” As an illustration, it includes two pages from Lloyd’s otherwise lost choreographic notation (figure 3). Since no correspondence between Kaufmann and Lloyd is known, Morris’s observations about their collaboration are particularly valuable. They are likely also to give some clues on the genesis of *Visages* and Lloyd’s other ballets based on original scores:

One evening this early fall, Miss Lloyd and Mr. Kaufmann met to confer on the ballet. They had to decide which was the best way to adapt *The Rose and the Ring* to musical-dance form. The story, too complicated for ballet form, had to be simplified. [...] After this meeting, which took hours of time, Mr. Kaufmann went home and made a preliminary sketch of the score. Miss Lloyd then joined him and listened to the music to catch the idiom to which she would have to adapt her steps. Certain points were discussed, small alterations made, the type of instrumentation was indicated, and the musical motif for each character was set. The next step was for Mr. Kaufmann to record the piano score. This took 14 sides on 12-inch records (Morris 1949c).

If one assumes that each side of these records contained three minutes of music, this figure is consistent with the playing times noted in the autograph score: 42 minutes.¹² In multi-act ballets of the Russian tradition, forty-two minutes is just one act’s worth; *The Nutcracker* is about twice as long for only two acts. Possibly, *The Rose and the Ring* was the shortest three-act ballet ever written. Still, Morris goes on:

Carlu Carter, as Betsinda, the lost princess, defends Prince Giglio, played by Leslie Carter, from the ferocious lion which gets loose at the circus where the court is celebrating their betrothal. The Lion is played by John Waks. The court looks in horror (“Ballet Fantasy” 1949).

Again the press acclaimed Kaufmann’s music, which employed a wide-ranging mix of styles and abounded in humorous tone painting. Morris wrote in the *Winnipeg Free Press*:

Mr. Kaufmann’s score is infectious and full of quirkish touches. His sense of humor is mercurial, whether it be in delineating the pompous approach of the king and his court, or swirling in the strains of circus music. It is music that a child can grasp and enjoy, and for an adult it has subtleties galore. Both Miss Lloyd and Mr. Kaufmann have agreed perfectly in their matching of music and movement. What is going on on the stage is mirrored in the orchestra pit. [...] Mr. Kaufmann couldn’t have asked for better playing than he got from the fine orchestra (Morris 1949d).

Maley’s description of the music in the *Winnipeg Tribune* is one of the longest and most detailed surviving assessments of any Kaufmann score:

Walter Kaufmann’s music is nothing less than inspired. His circus music itself is a thrilling melange of sharp, biting accents and tripping melodies, pitched mostly in higher registers of orchestral instruments in which the blare of trumpets, xylophones, cymbals and drums creates exciting effect.

¹² Walter Kaufmann Archive, File 32. Kaufmann jotted down the timings on the verso of the score’s title page.

¹³ See Blewchamp 1992, *passim*; Blewchamp 1997, 85; Wyman 1978, 42.

Figure 4: Still from Act 3 of *The Rose and the Ring* (“Ballet Fantasy” 1949, 13).



His theme for Princess Betsinda is nostalgic in character in which the strings achieve beautifully rich harmonic effects at various intervals during action in which she is chief participant—notably the pas de deux with Prince Giglio.

The “woof-woof” motive for the lion is most realistic and both the King’s and Queen’s entry and subsequent entrances are made doubly fascinating by the “very trumpety” effects for the King and a tune, very high on the clarinet, for the Queen. Countess Grudeneff’s [*sic, recte* Gruffanoff’s] appearance[s] are accompanied mostly by the bass clarinet in effective characterization and the staccato march-like motive for Prince Bulbo is one of Mr. Kaufmann’s most ingenious conceptions.

The final moment, with various characters, partners and ensembles, dancing in wild abandon, is one of the most thrilling interludes. Throughout, Mr. Kaufmann reveals a genius for co-ordinating musical and varied human elements in a perfect unison of music and ballet. The 24-piece orchestra gave him yeoman support (Maley 1949b).

Despite these accolades, *The Rose and the Ring* did not stir up the lasting excitement that *Visages* had caused. Maley found the plot too complicated and suggested that a narrator explain the action before every act (Maley 1949b). When *The Rose and the Ring* was revived the following year, Maley’s suggestion was heeded. Morriss writes that actor George Waight “came out before each scene to describe the action, and his presence undoubtedly was responsible for

a clearer understanding” (Morriss 1950). Maley had hoped that “although brief in time, the ballet, in its all-Winnipeg effort, should be presented annually for entertainment during the Yuletide season” (Maley 1949b) but his wish was never fulfilled. Why the ballet was dropped from the repertory cannot be determined at this point. But one thing is clear from the existing reviews: Kaufmann’s score was not at fault.

Visages in the (Royal) Winnipeg Ballet’s Repertory

Visages was shorter than *The Rose and the Ring*, but it lasted longer. The ballet remained in the repertory each season until the fire of 7–8 June 1954. While the roles of the Girl and the “emotions” were assigned to various dancers over the years, the role of the Man remained the exclusive responsibility of Arnold Spohr. For a tour through Ontario and Québec in October 1949, Kaufmann arranged a version for two pianos (Morriss 1949b). Joyce Vopni (born Clark), who created the role of Hate and danced in *Visages* until she left Winnipeg in 1953, writes to me on 22 February 2011:

I do remember that [this version of] the music was very good but I felt that it had more feeling and impact with the full orchestra as it was quite a dramatic ballet. Also, I seem to remember that it was sometimes difficult for the pianos to

keep up the proper tempo for the dancers, which could leave us in mid air or behind our movements.

Despite these difficulties, the two pianos arrangement became standard. Montréal, where the company performed at the Monument National, embraced *Visages* enthusiastically. On 25 October 1949, an anonymous review in *La Patrie* (now defunct) summarized the performances of the Winnipeg Ballet in the headline “ ‘Visages’ will be remembered”¹⁴ and followed up with more praise:

Visages deserves very special mention. Imagination has watched over the creation of this ballet by Gweneth Lloyd, to an original score by Walter Kaufmann. The choreography, intensely symbolic, lets the play of passions assailing two lovers come to the stage. Jean McKenzie garnered particular applause here (“Le Ballet de Winnipeg/‘Visages’ restera en mémoire” 1949).¹⁵

Visages returned to Montréal, now with orchestra, in the course of the third Canadian Ballet Festival, held at His Majesty’s Theatre in November 1950. *The Gazette* had the glorious idea of hiring Anatole Chujoy as guest critic. Again Chujoy praises *Visages*: “Seeing it again after a year and a half, one is still more impressed” (Chujoy 1950). On 16 October 1951, *Visages* received what could be seen as the highest possible honors when the Winnipeg Ballet gave a Command Performance for Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh on the occasion of their visit in Winnipeg. In early 1954, the troupe held a week-long *stagione*—from Monday, 8 February through Saturday, 13 February 1954— at the National Theatre in Washington, D.C., which was its first foray into a cultural centre of the United States. During that week, *Visages* was performed only once, on 9 February 1954, and on that particular night only one critic was apparently present, Paul Hume of the *Washington Post*. He wrote with undeniable condescension:

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet [...] brought forward a new ballet, *Visages* [...] with choreography by the company’s director, Gweneth Lloyd. It is a work peopled by Indecision, Jealousy, Lust, Fear, Greed, Hate, Tragedy, and of course a Girl and a Man. While the interaction of the emotions and passions is understandable, the motivation of most of the ballet is not clearly projected by the dancers (Hume 1954b).¹⁶

A performance in Québec City on 22 February 1954 would remain, to my knowledge, the last time that *Visages*

was ever heard with an orchestra. “R. L.,” the reviewer of *Le Soleil*, wrote some memorable lines:

In the symbolic vein, we were introduced to the ballet by Gweneth Lloyd, the director of the company, entitled *Visages*, accompanied by obsessive, demoniac music. Surrounded by apocalyptic decorations glowing in red, two lovers are fighting evil spirits whom they finally defeat: Indecision, Jealousy, Lust, Fear, Greed, Hate, and Tragedy. The colors of the costumes hit as violently as the sounds do, and they create an atmosphere of tension that gradually becomes exasperating. Kay Bird and Arnold Spohr performed the leading roles with great skill, being successively tender, tormented, cruel, and passionate. The witches’ Sabbath of the seven “emotions” gave way to several gracious entrances of ballerinas squeezed into knitted shirts [a reference to the numbers that followed *Visages*]. One word on the orchestra, which has pleasantly surprised us. (R. L. 1954).¹⁷

The last ever performance of *Visages*, with piano accompaniment, took place in Calgary on 17 May 1954, only three weeks before the fire. While the orchestral parts and the arrangement of *Visages* for two pianos were most likely destroyed in the fire, the autograph orchestral scores of the Kaufmann ballets have fortunately survived. The company had obviously returned them to their author some time before.

Why No Third Ballet Score by Kaufmann?

It seems strange, in view of these past successes, that there were no further collaborations between Kaufmann and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. In an editorial written for the souvenir program of the last pre-fire season, 1953–54, critic S. Roy Maley calls for new commissions from Kaufmann. About half of his article is devoted to the state of ballet music in Canada. His verdict is clear:

Best of all original music for ballet, written for Canadian companies, was written by Walter Kaufmann, conductor of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, who worked with Miss Lloyd on an original ballet, “Visages”. First performed on January 31, 1949, the ballet marked the tenth anniversary of the Ballet. [...] Of all scores composed for Canadian ballets, is so far as the writer is concerned, Mr. Kaufmann’s is the only one which “sounds” over the airwaves. John Weinzwieg’s music for the Volkoff Ballet, “The Red Ear of Corn”, without the benefit of the visual picture, sounded neither particularly interesting nor inspired when heard over the air in April [*recte* March] of 1949 [live CBC broadcast

¹⁴ “ ‘Visages’ restera en mémoire.” The English translation is mine.

¹⁵ “ ‘Visages’ mérite une mention toute particulière. L’imagination a présidé à l’agencement de ce ballet de Gwenneth [*sic*] Lloyd, sur une partition originale de Walter Kaufman [*sic*]. La chorégraphie, intensément symbolique, fait venir en scène le jeu des passions assaillant deux amoureux. Jean McKenzie y fut particulièrement applaudie.” The English translation is mine.

¹⁶ However, Hume’s overall impression of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was better than on the previous night (see Hume 1954a).

¹⁷ “Dans la veine symbolique, on nous présenta, sur une musique obsédante et démoniaque, le ballet de Gweneth Lloyd, la directrice de la troupe, intitulé ‘Visages’. Dans un décor apocalyptique aux reflets rougeoyants, deux amoureux sont aux prises avec de mauvais génies, dont ils triompheront finalement: l’indécision, la jalousie, la luxure, la peur, l’avarice, la haine et la tragédie. Les couleurs des costumes s’y heurtent aussi violemment que les sons et créent une atmosphère tendue qui devient graduellement exaspérante. Kay Bird et Arnold Spohr s’acquittèrent avec une grande habileté des rôles de vedette et furent successivement tendres, tourmentés, cruels et passionnés. La ronde sabbatique des sept émotions dissonantes donna lieu à plusieurs évolutions gracieuses des ballerines, moulées dans des maillots de jersey. [...] Un mot de l’orchestre qui nous a agréablement surpris.” The English translation is mine.

from the Second Ballet Festival]. [...] Mr. Kaufmann also composed music “The Rose and the Ring,” a children’s ballet which Miss Lloyd presented at Christmastime some years ago. With his prolific and versatile talent as a composer, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet could commission Mr. Kaufmann for some new work. This should be an action of immediate concern. This music had a Prokofieff [*sic*] flavor, with both charming and grotesque effects, which fused well with the dance and the music (Maley 1953).

The last sentence probably only refers to *The Rose and the Ring*, which was no longer in the repertory; note the past tense. Interestingly, the Walter Kaufmann Archive does hold a draft for a third ballet score, *Wang* (Walter Kaufmann Archive, box 12). The manuscript is undated but, according to an autograph work list (Walter Kaufmann Archive, box 1), the work was composed in 1956. It would seem logical that Kaufmann abandoned the project as soon as he accepted Indiana University’s offer of a teaching position in the summer of 1956.¹⁸

A one-act work in four continuous scenes, *Wang* was to play about 27 minutes, as Kaufmann remarked on the margin of the first page. A detailed scenario, “free after a Burmese Fairy Tale by Walter Kaufmann”—typewritten, single-spaced, three pages long—accompanies the musical sketch. The outstanding feature of *Wang* is the participation of a singing narrator. Was this unorthodox addition a reaction to Maley’s suggestion on the occasion of *The Rose and the Ring*? If so, then the narrator’s function goes far beyond what Maley may have imagined and what George Waight actually realized in 1950:

[The Narrator] sits on a very high chair (something like a high bar chair) at one side of the stage. He chants his narration and uses a long stick (like in the earliest silent movies) to show the audience who’s who, etc. For simplicity’s sake the whole story happens in China. Any time.” (Walter Kaufmann Archive, box 12).

China, not Burma—Eastern Asia is Eastern Asia: “The style of this little Ballet should imitate the East Asiatic [*sic*] art of dancing as much as possible and omit everything that reminds of Western Culture.” (Walter Kaufmann Archive, box 12). Kaufmann goes on: “The Narrator is the only one who is and sounds completely ‘American,’ matter-of-fact, etc. Everything else highly in style and in sever[e] Chinese costume.” (Walter Kaufmann Archive, box 12).

Kaufmann was a respected ethnomusicologist, and his achievement in that field has proven to be the most durable part of his legacy. In this sense, the frankly colonialist concept of *Wang*, in which a fatherly “American” (which would probably include “Canadian”) points with a stick at childlike Asians and makes fun of them, comes somewhat unexpected, although probably it was in accord with the spirit of 1950s Winnipeg. Be this as it may, *Wang* was never performed and apparently never orchestrated. The planned orchestral forces are listed on a title page, and there are orchestral cues throughout the sketch, but the music is mostly notated on three staves only, with the top staff reserved for the narrator.

It may be assumed that Kaufmann was no longer involved in the Winnipeg Ballet because Lloyd herself was not anymore. Although she nominally remained the company’s director until 1957, she had moved to Toronto in 1950 and largely neglected the company in Winnipeg after that. When she created a last choreography to original music for the Winnipeg Ballet in 1952, *Shadow on the Prairie*, the chosen composer was not Kaufmann but Robert Fleming. Moreover, the years around 1950 saw the rise of Canadian nationalism. Both *The Red Ear of Corn* (by Weinzwieg and Volkoff) and *Shadow on the Prairie* were conscious attempts to create a national Canadian ballet, with a Canadian locale, Canadian characters, Canadian folklore, and, in the case of *The Red Ear of Corn*, Canadian legend and myth. Although the National Film Board’s documentary hailed *Visages* as an “all-Canadian ballet” (Blais 1949), it was such only by virtue of the circumstances of its creation, not by its content. *Visages* was an attempt to create a piece of art for art’s sake, something timeless—but not specifically Canadian. In its aesthetics it harks back to Ruby Ginner’s project of “Revived Greek dance” (see footnote 2), and, in its use of masks, to ancient Greek tragedy; it also could remind one of German expressionism of the 1920s. *The Rose and the Ring* was quite a different work, but again there was no attempt to create anything unmistakably Canadian. The same could be said of the unfinished *Wang*.

***Visages*—resterat-il en mémoire?**

Visages was the property of a single ballet company, but thanks to the tours of this company, its music gained a wider

¹⁸ The correspondence related to Kaufmann’s appointment in Bloomington and departure from Winnipeg is preserved in the Walter Kaufmann Archive (box 1). Kaufmann accepted his new position in a letter to Wilfred C. Bain, Dean of the School of Music in Bloomington, on 8 September 1956, but he was not released from his duties in Winnipeg until 17 January 1957 (letter from Kaufmann to Bain, 8 November 1956; see also Morriss 1957).

¹⁹ See Kaufmann’s letter to Dr. Heinrich Simbriger, 25 January 1976, Walter Kaufmann Archive, box 1: “Unfortunately I have to disappoint you regarding publishers. Once I had a good relation with the Schirmers in New York, but these gentlemen did not do anything but offering my operas (the entire sheet music) to theaters for hire, at incredibly high rental fees. In the course of time I got tired of it and canceled the contract to my great relief. Ever since (and also before) I have not paid much attention to publishers. I have not offered anything for print, and thus I have experienced few disappointments.” (German original: “Ich muss Sie leider enttäuschen mit Verlegern. Einmal hatte ich eine gute Verbindung mit Schirmers in New York, aber die Herrschaften taten nichts anderes als meine Opern (das ganze Material) leihweise den Theatern anzubieten für unglaublich hohe Leihgebühren. Das wurde mir mit der Zeit etwas zu dumm, und ich habe dann die ganze Verbindung mit großer Erleichterung aufgelöst. Ich habe mich seitdem (und auch früher) nie sehr um Verleger gekümmert, habe nichts zum Druck angeboten und wurde so wenig enttäuscht.”)

dissemination than any other of the hundreds of scores that Walter Kaufmann composed—if only because Kaufmann avoided music publishers that could have distributed his other works.¹⁹ It was neither Kaufmann’s nor Lloyd’s fault that this successful run ended in 1954. It would be tempting to give the work a second chance. Is it possible?

In 1992, Anna Blewchamp reconstructed *The Wise Virgins*, her personal favorite among Lloyd’s ballets. Her extraordinary effort, which could not have succeeded without the active collaboration of the original cast and even Gweneth Lloyd herself, is documented in detail in her master’s thesis (Blewchamp 1992). Yet Blewchamp never considered a revival of *Visages*, although at the time, the original cast was still mostly alive (which is no longer the case). When I asked her about her apparent indifference to *Visages* in December 2010, she declared that she considered the film produced by the National Film Board to be of little help, since it had already been edited and did not show the entire stage. Moreover, as the film documents a live performance, Blewchamp suspects that the dancers made mistakes. Blewchamp was not aware of Kaufmann’s surviving scores until I mentioned their existence, but it is unlikely that, had she known earlier, she would have changed her mind.

The remaining hope of a revival, albeit faint, is based on the observation that the film crew of 1949 produced far more footage than what made its way to the final cut since they obviously used various cameras and angles. Both performances and rehearsals were filmed (R. McL. F. 1949; Bain 1949). It may well be that some of the discarded material has survived in some archive (other than Dance Collection Danse). Without such additional input, the choreography of *Visages*, beyond the excerpts shown on the film, is probably lost forever. Still, the music deserves to be heard again on the grounds that it enjoyed considerable success in its time—with various audiences and critics—and that its disappearance was entirely due to factors that had nothing to do with the music itself.

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